

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 SAN JO 00226 181412Z  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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R 172255Z JAN 77

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6195  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 0226

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: XM, CS, SOPN, PINT

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO TODMAN NOMINATION

DEPARTMENT PASS USIA/ILA

1. SUMMARY: LOCAL REACTION TO TODMAN NOMINATION HAS BORDERED ON THE JOYFUL. PRESIDENT ODUBER, EXPRESIDENT FIGUERES AND FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO HAVE WARMLY EXPRESSED THEIR APPROVAL. BOTH OPPOSITION AND PRO-GOVERNMENT MEDIA ECHO THIS SENTIMENT, AND EMPHASIZE NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF COSTA RICA AND COSTA RICANS, AND HIS PERFORMANCE HERE AS AMBASSADOR. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT AMBASSADOR TODMAN HAS BEEN SELECTED BY PRESIDENT ELECT CARTER TO HEAD ARA HAS BEEN GREETED WITH PLEASURE BY MOST COSTA RICANS. THE LOCAL MEDIA HEADLINED THE NEWS AND EXTENSIVELY COVERED THE AMBASSADOR'S RETURN TO COSTA RICA EVENING JANUARY 14 INCLUDING LIVE TV AND RADIO COVERAGE. WIRE SERVICE REPORTS CARRYING UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 SAN JO 00226 181412Z

US REACTION, INCLUDING OPPOSITION TO THE SELECTION BY SOME HISPANIC GROUPS, HAVE ALSO RECEIVED WIDE DISSEMINATION. THE INCLUSION OF PERSONAL VIGNETTES ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S TRAVELS THROUGHOUT COSTA RICA AND AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH COSTA RICANS OF ALL STRIPES HAVE GIVEN A FAVORABLE TINGE IN THESE STORIES TO THE SELECTION.

3. THE GOCR SEEMS PLEASED BY THE NOMINATION. PRESIDENT ODUBER

CALLED THE AMBASSADOR "KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING LATIN AMERICA." ODUBER SAID THAT THE NOMINATION "WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN IMPROVING US - LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS." FORMER PRESIDENT JOSE "PEPE" FIGUERES DESCRIBED AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S NOMINATION AS "AN IMPORTANT STEP TAKEN BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TOWARDS INTEGRATING RACIAL AND NATIONAL MINORITIES." CITING LINCOLN, FIGUERES DESCRIBED NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY AS A MAN "WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE." GONZALO FACIO, LONGTIME FOREIGN MINISTER WHO IS SLATED OFFICIALLY TO RESUME THAT POSITION FEBRUARY 1, DECLARED THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN SIGNIFIES "THE FORGING OF A NEW, MORE EFFECTIVE AND VIGOROUS INTERAMERICAN POLICY BY THE US." HE TOOK ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH CHARGES QUESTIONING THE AMBASSADOR'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS, NOTING THAT SUCH CHARGES "ARE WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION, FOR, IF THERE IS ANY MAN WHO IS TRULY DEMOCRATIC IT IS MR. TODMAN -- I KNOW THIS BECAUSE I KNOW HIM PERSONNALLY." FACIO ADDED: "I KNOW THAT HE WILL SUPPORT STRENGTHENING OF AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS."

4. LEADING OPPOSITION DAILY LA NACION CARRIED A SIGNED COMMENTARY BY ITS DIRECTOR GUIDO FERNANDEZ ON THE TODMAN SELECTION JANUARY 16. AFTER REVIEWING CHARGES THAT THE AMBASSADOR LACKED SUFFICIENT AREA EXPERIENCE AND EXAMINING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LAST 15 ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, FERNANDEZ DECLARED THAT "WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT AMBASSADOR TODMAN HAS A LOT OF DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE. HE ALSO POSSESSES A CHARACTERISTIC NOT FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED IN CAREER OFFICERS: A POLITICAL INSTINCT THAT GENERATES FRIENDSHIP AND WARMTH TO THOSE AROUND HIM. HIS SPANISH IS PERFECT. HIS RELATIONS WITH THE DIVERSE SECTORS OF THE COSTA RICAN COMMUNITY ARE DISTINGUISHED BY BALANCE, COMPREHENSION AND

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 SAN JO 00226 181412Z

PURPOSE....TODMAN'S OTHER VIRTUE IS THE DISCIPLINED AND METHODICAL WAY HE CARRIES OUT HIS ASSIGNMENT." FERNANDEZ CONCLUDED BY SAYING "WITH TOOLS LIKE THESE FOR THE JOB, NOBODY CAN DOUBT THAT TODMAN WILL BE A GOOD ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LATIN AMERICA."

5. IN ITS EDITORIAL JANUARY 16, PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY EXCELSIOR DECLARED "WHEN THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED THAT THE NEW SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE PROPOSED AMBASSADOR TODMAN FOR SUCH A HIGH POSITION, COSTA RICANS RECEIVED IT WITH CONTRADICTORY FEELINGS; A MEXTURE OF JUBILATION WITH THE PAIN OF SEEING AMBASSADOR TODMAN LEAVE OUR COUNTRY WHERE HE HAS CARRIED OUT HIS FUNCTIONS WITH EXQUISITE DISCRETION, TALENT, HIS WINNING WAYS AND HIS DETERMINATION TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE." EXCELSIOR NOTES THAT THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESIGNATE AS AMBASSADOR "HAS DEMONSTRATED A KEEN SENSIBILITY AND A RARE FACILITY FOR UNDERSTANDING PROBLEMS AND DEALING WITH THEM. HIS INTELLIGENCE HAS PERMITTED HIM RAPIDLY TO GRASP THE PSYCHOLOGY AND SENSITIVITIES OF THE COSTA RICAN PEOPLE, THEIR ASPIRATIONS, SCRUPLES, DOUBTS,

AND WHERE THEY WISH TO GO. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS, AMBASSADOR TODMAN HAS NOT HAD TO REVERT TO PRESUMED LATIN AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE, BUT RATHER HIS OWN INTELLIGENCE, HIS OWN CULTURE AND HIS OWN SENSIBILITY THAT ARE THREE VERY CONSIDERABLE ATTRIBUTES.Z

6. OPPOSITION DAILY LA REPUBLICA CALLED THE DESIGNATION OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN "REASON FOR PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS FOR ALL COSTA RICANS." IT PRAISED HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS HERE AND HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES. LA REPUBLICA NOTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAS SERVED IN ONE OF THE FEW DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICS IN THE HEMISPHERE DESCRIBING THIS AS IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE THAT HE TAKES TO HIS NEW JOB.

7. TV AND RADIO COMMENTARY, AS WELL AS DAILY NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, HAVE BEEN HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC RE THE TODMAN NOMINATION BOTH IN TERMS OF THE MAN AND THE JOB, AND ALSO WITH REGARD TO UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 SAN JO 00226 181412Z

THE HONOR THIS APPOINTMENT BESTOWS UPON COSTA RICA. PERSONAL COMMENTS REFLECT MEDIA REACTIONS IN SUBSTANCE AND TONE. TODMAN

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## Message Attributes

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